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**THE GOD-NEED TODAY**  
FRANCIS TALBOT, S.J.

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**MERCY-MURDER**  
A. GUTHRIE BADENOCH

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**CHRIST THE WORKER'S BROTHER**  
PROF. ALFRED O'RAHILLY

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**The Catholic Mind**

Volume XXXIV, No. 22 November 22, 1936 Price 5 Cents

THE AMERICA PRESS - 461 Eighth Avenue - New York, N. Y.

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## **Real Work of Zeal**

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## **Worthwhile Lay Apostolate**

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THE CATHOLIC MIND, November 22, 1936. Volume XXXIV, No. 22. Published semi-monthly by The America Press, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York. Subscription postpaid, United States, 5 cents a copy; yearly, \$1.00; foreign, \$1.25. Entered as second-class matter, October 22, 1914, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 4, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rates of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on June 29, 1913. Trade-mark "Catholic Mind," Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

## German Bishops' Pastoral Asking Removal of Restrictions on Church

*Text of the Pastoral Letter written by the members of the German hierarchy at their annual meeting at Fulda, in which they called upon Chancellor Hitler to live up to the terms of the Concordat with the Holy See and to abolish the restriction against Catholic activities, pointing to the terrible events in Spain as evidence that the Communists regard the Church and religion as their chief enemy.  
Issued by the N. C. W. C. News Service.*

### BELOVED PEOPLE OF OUR DIOCESES:

Beside the tomb of St. Boniface, the glorious Apostle of the Germans, the heroic martyr of our Christian faith, again this year, as in previous years, we, the Catholic Episcopacy, assemble in fraternal collaboration for joint deliberations and weighty conclusions. We have brought to this sacred tomb all the bitter lack of faith of our time, all the depressing and increasing anxieties concerning the education and philosophical and ethical training of our youth, all the painful grief caused by the sharp injuries from which we have suffered in recent months both in ecclesiastical and extra-ecclesiastical Catholic activities in the different domains.

We have brought to this holy tomb again a fixed determination, with that unbroken and self-sacrificing courage proper to us as the successors of the Apostles, to maintain and protect, through our interest in the German people as a whole, the rights and the liberties that the natural law and the positive law guarantee to us. From the duty to maintain and protect these rights and liberties before God and souls, people and fatherland, no one can absolve us. These follow us along our Episcopal way and shall accompany us before the tribunal of the omniscient God.

### MEMORIAL TO CHANCELOR

As we did last year concerning the many tribulations, we have again at this general conference directed a detailed memorial to the Fuehrer and Reich's Chancellor. In sincere

devotion to the people and with sincere loyalty to the State, but also with German honesty and frankness, we have directed his attention to the increasing painful disturbances and disorders in the religious and church life, to all the undeserved generalizations and serious accusations, and to all the offenses directed against the Holy Father, the Bishops, priests and Religious. This year we have allowed ourselves to be concerned not only about the Catholic people within the jurisdiction of our joint address, but to warn also of the deplorably critical condition of the world and the remedy therefor.

In the new State we claim no exceptional laws and privileges, but only to be permitted that activity and freedom that our adversary presumes upon ordinarily in excess. We demand only that holy right which the Fuehrer himself guaranteed solemnly, in the summer of three years ago, for all the world to see, by signing the Concordat. In doing so we begin with the public facts and convictions that at this very moment Communism and Bolshevism, with diabolical tenacity, are attacking both from the east and from the west Germany, the heart of Europe, encircling her, as it were, to squeeze her in a fatal pincers. Therefore, it is essential that German unity be not weakened through religious woes and dissension, suspicion and strife. To the contrary, a vigorous development and a speedy religious peace should strengthen and make impregnable our national defense, so that not only all Europe may be purged of Bolshevism, but the whole civilized world, delivered, will owe us gratitude.

#### RED MENACE IN SPAIN

Already the frightful spectacle that unfortunate Spain has afforded us in recent months gives us cause to reflect. But we dispense with any attempt to enumerate in detail the barbarous misdeeds which a fanatical populace, aroused by the lying promises of Russian emissaries, have committed and which have shocked the civilized world. But we in Germany, in addition to a cordial Christian pity for the numerous victims of this unprecedented persecution, we must take into account this fact: If now Spain should succumb to Bolshevism, the fate of Europe may not be definitely decided, but it will at least become terribly involved. It is evident that this would give a special mission to our people and to

our country. May our Fuehrer, with the aid of God, succeed in this enormous task through an unwavering zeal and with the loyal collaboration of all our fellow countrymen!

Blood-drenched Spain causes us to remark a second fact. In Germany in recent months the Catholic Church, the Pope, the Bishops and priests have been calumniated by charges that they had entered into relations with Bolshevism and Communism, and certain books, magazines and journals have even spoken of fraternization between Rome and Moscow. Spain should open the eyes of all those still capable of viewing objectively. Russian and Spanish Bolshevism sees in the Catholic Church, in her clergy and religious congregations its most irreconcilable and dangerous enemy. That is why hate and a desire to annihilate are carried to the bloodiest extremes. This fact causes our priests and Religious to appear in a different light from that which certain spotlights have tried to throw upon them here and there in Germany in recent months. One may predict that outside the Iberian Peninsula also the Communist mob will strike first of all at the priests and Religious, for in them they see the strongest bulwark against their ideas and their propagation.

This fact is obvious: As has been shown in Russia and Mexico, the beginning and, what is more, the duration of Bolshevism is possible only when religion is outlawed as the opiate of the people, and faith in Christ, in a personal, supernatural God, and in eternal reward, vanishes from the hearts and consciences of men. This proves that we should strive to protect this faith heroically and by every licit means among our people and in our country, instilling it particularly and profoundly in our German youth.

#### REAL FOE OF BOLSHEVISM

Faced with Bolshevism every modern philosophical substitute, which arrogates to itself the name of religion, but which possesses no enlightening force for the reason and no propelling force for the moral life, remains ineffectual. For the god that they put in the place of the true Christian God is not distinguished from themselves, being blood of our blood or, rather, a chimera of human fantasy. Of what importance is a god created by man, and not the reverse? And

what does it signify when together with faith in a personal, supernatural God and belief in eternal reward, there collapses also all those obligations on which the moral life of mankind is founded?

There follows a third thought which, in the face of the Spanish atrocities, confronts us: Faith in God, as Christianity teaches, should not be combated, for this faith alone constitutes the granite base on which a solid and conquering rampart against Bolshevism can be built. It is not opposition to the Catholic Church but peace and concord with her that are essential to conquer the spiritual conditions of Bolshevism. It is not by means of the weapons of war that Bolshevism is struck at its deepest root, but by regeneration in Jesus Christ and His Church, in Europe generally and in our own country particularly. It is not the philosophies *Weltanschauungen* born of blood and of the character of the times that can aid us, but only those convictions that are strong enough to resist all tempests because they are founded on God the Holy and Eternal, and because they are binding upon us for all eternity.

Who does not repulse Bolshevism in the religious sphere, opens the door to it in the political and economic spheres, and no worldly power will be capable of closing it. This is a concatenation which not only logic and psychology demonstrate, but which is also based on historic data up to the present.

Beloved people of our dioceses, in consideration of all this, we, German Bishops, cannot understand why the possibilities for action of Christianity and our Church in our country and among our people have been reduced more and more and eventually limited to the interior of the churches. We cannot understand why our Catholic works are prevented from accomplishing their beneficent tasks until their very existence is placed in question. We cannot understand why membership in Church associations as well as in civic organizations is again and again forbidden, even in the young women's sodalities, and why brave heads of families are threatened with being deprived of earning their daily bread unless they quit their Catholic unions. We cannot understand why the beneficent arms of charity are being shortened more and more and Catholic Sisters are driven from the bedside of the sick and from the orphanages.

## RESTRICTIONS ON PRESS

We cannot understand why the Catholic press, reduced to purely ecclesiastical and religious news, should be hounded by ordinances which give to the people the impressions that they are witnessing nothing more or less than the pure and simple disappearance of the Catholic press. Nor can we understand why so often German adolescents are withdrawn from under Christian influences, so that anti-Christian ideas may be inculcated in them, or so that they may be deprived of the vital force of their Catholic conviction by a systematic interconfessionalism. Nor can we comprehend why, in certain sections of Germany, efforts are being made to abolish the confessional schools and private Catholic schools where they are not already suppressed by a plebiscite, although the German Concordat guarantees their existence and the right to found new confessional schools or even, with respect to private schools, with right of Religious Orders and Congregations to teach there.

As Germans we demand the right to work for the welfare of the German nation according to the principles of our Faith and to preserve to it, for its good, those forces which, in the past, have made Germany great and glorious.

Faced with the terrible events in Spain, we implore and adjure all those who have the destinies of our nation in their hands and on their consciences not to remain deaf to our words as pastors which come from the depths of our German hearts, but that they assure, by the rapid establishment of the peace guaranteed by the Concordat, German unity and its powerful concord which will fortify our nation for its great tasks in the future by imbibing force from Christian sources.

With the fidelity and love of pastors, we encourage Catholics to persevere in the strength of faith despite all that disturbs and saddens us, and to demonstrate by means of a conscientious Catholic life that our divine religion is a strength that preserves the State and serves the Nation. As Christians and Catholics why should we despair? Eternal truth and divine strength are ours. *Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini!* Our help is in the name of the Lord.

May the Almighty and Merciful God bless you. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Given at Fulda on the feast of St. Bernard, August 20, 1936.

# The God-need Today

FRANCIS TALBOT, S.J.

*Address delivered over Columbia Network, September 20, 1936, under auspices of the Church of the Air.*

THE day for minor differences of opinion in regard to religion has passed. In these our times, we are faced with the major differences, with the most fundamental and basic differences. There was a time not long since when Catholic theologian would dispute with Protestant theologian, when Jewish teacher would be in conflict with the Gentile scholar. Those disputes and those conflicts and those differences of belief will remain as long as Catholic is Catholic, and Protestant is Protestant, and Jew is Jew. I do not mean to say that dogma is being merged, that doctrine is being compromised, that changes are in process by which Protestant would accept Catholic affirmations or Jewish affirmations, or by which Catholic would drop one dogma of Faith at Protestant request. But I do mean to affirm that Catholic, Protestant and Jew, that every believer in God is being forced back to the primary and fundamental dogma on which all of them unite—namely, the affirmation of the existence of a supreme Being whom we know as God.

The day has come when all religious beliefs, in general, when all common canons of morality, when the foundations of all religion are being denied. There has arisen in our contemporary world an opponent of all supernatural religion, and there is consequently required in our contemporary world a United Front of all believers in a supernatural religion. There used to be, in earlier generations, some atheists who positively and defiantly proclaimed there was no God. But they were few and they were not given much attention, except perhaps as oddities. Today, in our generation, there are multitudes upon multitudes who assert vehemently that there is no God, and who act as if there were no God. These multitudes are organized and are firmly banded together for the purpose of indoctrinating all men with their theory that there is no God. There are not only multitudes of organized men and women who are atheists, there are governments who profess atheism as the nations of the past



have professed Christianity. Russia has attempted through a decade and a half to pluck out the roots of religion by plucking out from the Russian mind the idea of an existent God. Mexico, indoctrinated by Moscow, is raising a generation of children who sing their school songs, that there is no God. Germany has a dictatorship that denies a Christian or a Jewish concept of God and substitutes a pagan cult of nature. Spain, in its government, is expressing its denial of God by daily outrages, and its hate of the idea of a God by inhuman desecrations. And in this country, in our homeland, the number of the deniers of God is reaching amazing proportions. The union of the deniers of God is creating a most dangerous crisis.

These men and women have convinced themselves or they have been persuaded to the belief, positive and affirmative, that there *is* no God, that there *cannot* be a God, that there *is no need* for a God, that the belief in a God is a superstition and a joke. There are millions of others in the United States who are closely akin to the outright atheist. These are the doubters, these are the skeptics, these are the agnostics. These are the men who are not convinced by the arguments in favor of a supernatural Being called God, these are the men who do not think it of sufficient importance to consider any arguments on the subject, these are the men who find little need for the operations of a God over themselves or over other human beings. These are the children of yesterday who have been reared in homes divorced of religion, and educated in schools from which all religion has been excluded. They are not atheists outright, but they are incipient atheists. They do not deny the existence of God, but they do not affirm that *God can be*, and that *God need be*, and that *God must be*. These hundreds of thousands, it may be, these tens of millions of Americans are closer in many ways to the United Front of Atheists than they are to the common Front of Jews and Christians.

In the limited time I enjoy speaking to you, I shall not attempt to marshall arguments designed to prove to you that there is a God. I shall not appeal to the Bible. I shall not invoke the infallible teachings of my Church. I shall speak neither as a theologian nor as a philosopher. Nor even as one who thinks logically about natural phenomena, or one who finds reasons for the existence of a Supreme God in the

rising and the setting of the sun, or reasons in the sea or the sand along the seashore, or reasons in the mechanism and the instinct and the vital spark in bird and fish and animal, or reasons in the marvelous delicacy and adaptability and beauty of the human body, or reasons in the intellect and the free will and the aspirations of the human soul. I shall not seek to prove that there *must* be a God, if we are to explain satisfactorily the presence of an earth such as ours, and to explain satisfactorily our own presence on this earth. I shall not declaim against the absurdities of those who explain away the earth as a self-producing and a self-winding machine, and who look upon man as a being who exists without a first producer and has no purpose except that of being transformed from one kind of material to another kind of material. I say only one thing, and, thinking of the world of today, I say it with a kind of agony. We *need* God. We *need* God terribly. We *need* the *idea* of God more than our fathers and our forefathers ever needed that idea and that belief.

We need all that God represents, all that the idea of God includes. Our civilization and our culture have been founded on a belief in God, and what God represents and means to us; the tragedies of our civilization, of our culture, of our individual lives have come from the abandonment of what God represents and means. All the order, all the stability, all the justice, all the charity and love that we have in this world are traceable to the idea of a God who is infinite in His wisdom, who is omnipotent in His power, who is eternal in His existence, who is of infinite justice, who loves us with an infinite love, and who wishes to gather us up from this material world and open up before us an eternal world in happy union with Himself. Let me repeat: we *need* such a God, and what that God represents if we are to live in organized society as human beings. Those who deny the existence of God and what the idea of God represents to man are parasites living upon a God-believing world. They are being supported by it and enjoying the benefits of it the while they seek to destroy it. Let them create a world without God, and what have you? You have a world of human beings without a sufficient reason why any single person should act like a human being. Why should a man who doesn't believe in God be honest? Why should he be just

in his dealings with his fellow man? Because the State demands him to be? That is not a restraining reason. Because organized society or the opinion of his fellow man demands it? That is not a sufficiently impelling reason. Because of his dignity as an upright man? He has no dignity without the fundamental concept of a God. Why should a man not be a thief, if the higher concept of a God does not exist in his mind and actuate his procedure? Why should a man be chaste, why should one be faithful in human relations, if there is not a governing concept that has been derived from the idea of God? Why should not a man be revengeful, why should he not ravage and plunder and murder, if he believes that there is no God, if he conceives of this world of ours as a combination of blind forces that blindly came together, if he believes that there is no higher force than himself, no greater good than his own advantage, no guilt for any act that interferes with his pleasure or his survival, no ultimate justice that will hold him responsible, no final destiny except that of a grave beneath the sod or a pinch of ashes in an urn? Without God and the idea of God, why should we be good, why should we be noble, why should we be heroic, why should we love purely and unselfishly, why should we seek the spiritual above the material? I ask you, and I defy you to answer convincingly to yourself or to another. We *need* a God, a living, a loving God, if we are to live and to love as men.

Furthermore, we need a God if we are to exist as a nation among the nations of the world. Russia would not be the chaos that it is, the country where freedom is throttled, rights are suppressed, justice is betrayed, if Russia had been moulded on the idea of a God. Mexico would not be the land of broken hearts and depressed souls, of treachery and of violent passions, if the idea of God had been firmly and ineradicably planted in its people and the ideal of God had been faithfully honored and the precepts of God's existence had been practised. Spain, in the days gone by, would not have had its peonage and its injustice and its suffering people, nor would it, this very day, be the land of civil war, carnage and butchery, with consecrated men and women turned into a holocaust, with its sacred places violated and destroyed, if the idea of God had been an actuating force in the soul of every Spaniard of high and low degree.

The nations of the world *need* God today, as they have always *needed* God in the past. In the past, even in Christian countries and civilizations, the men of the past failed humanity just so much as they failed God. They benefited themselves and humanity in proportion to their fidelity to God. Count up all the ills of the world of the past, and then credit them to man's repudiation of the *need* for God. The ills of the contemporary world are greater than ever before, and they are greater because man feels that he has no *need* for God. But man has *need* for God. Man with his nation and his culture and his civilization will destroy himself and all that he has achieved by destroying in his soul his God.

## Mercy-Murder

A. GUTHRIE BADENOCH

*Reprinted from the Month (London), in the issue of September, 1936.*

A MODERN car sweeps through the market-place of an Asiatic village. The crowd edges off the thoroughfare and half a dozen pariah dogs scatter out of the way; all but one, more feeble than the rest, which is struck down and run over. It limps howling towards the huts, and the others pursue with loud barkings and drag it down and worry it. This is the law of the wolf-pack, of the buffalo-herd, the ethics of the jungle.

Extermination of the old and feeble has the sanction of custom among certain savage tribes of mankind, notably in West Africa. The usage finds some extenuation in the low level of aboriginal culture; in the absence of any reasoned recognition of man's personality, amid a society where lion and crocodile are treated as individuals and are addressed as "Mr."; in the pressing of the population on the often precarious means of support; in ignorance of the causes and communicability of disease; in difficulty of isolation and care of the sick and infirm; and in the irritation consequent on the long-continued co-presence in a one-room hut of a creature perhaps "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything," whose very humanity seems questionable and whose infirmity is a continued offence to the other inmates.

It is attributable to uncivilized man's moral sense that an attempt is generally made to compass the removal of the burden as indirectly as possible. In West Africa exposure is practised, so that wild animals and the elements may be supposed to incur the guilt of the final act.

In a healthy peasant community, if there is a mouth to fill there is usually a crust to fill it with. In our urbanized civilization on the other hand, where every slice of bread costs a definite fraction of a fixed and narrow income, the burden of the old presses heavily on the younger members. The old-age pension, however, in this country, often makes an elder a positive asset to a poor household. Again, the poor are habituated to small daily sacrifices made to help one another. For these and other reasons it was in the old days, at least, rare enough to find a poor household showing anxiety to have an old bedridden patient removed even to hospital, except in the case of mental enfeeblement.<sup>1</sup> In spite of all this, the experience of other Public Assistance officials coincides with my own, that there is a growing tendency to shift the burden of the old on to the broad shoulders of the Local Authority.

It must be admitted that the development of what is virtually a State medical service helps to the same end. A busy and conscientious panel-practitioner often grudges to incurable and querulous old age the time he feels were better devoted to his younger patients; and he too becomes an advocate for the herding of the old into rate-supported hospitals where the individual touch is almost inevitably lacking, and where distance prevents frequent visiting by relatives.

Other things remaining as they are, this tragedy of the old will deepen as their numbers grow. The expectation of life has increased by fifteen years in the last half-century, and the population is becoming increasingly distributed into the age-groups over the allotted span. The process is intensified by a falling birth-rate, and is by no means compensated by the admirable fall in infant mortality. In fact, as Dr. Colvin has pointed out elsewhere, a boy and girl born today in separate homes, who ultimately meet and marry, are likely to have, in the middle age of their lives, three or

<sup>1</sup> Here, of course, all difficulties are increased, as it is dangerous to leave the patient for a moment, whilst the poor creature itself seems something sub-human.

four aged parents to succour and support, with possibly a grandparent or two thrown in. This likelihood already begins to cast its shadow before it, as any doctor realizes who has to answer the questions put to him at the bedside of stricken age.

In the middle classes the situation is complicated by the costliness of nursing and of medical and particularly of surgical treatment; by the higher standard of comfort and ease both of body and of mind, demanded by the rest of the family, with mental and æsthetic faculties well developed; by the pagan shame of contact with physical and mental debility; and, as one has often noticed, by a kind of nervous sensitiveness that shrinks from proximity to suffering, even in others. It is as if our modern education had sharpened our sensibilities without developing our judgment and self-control, and without teaching the virtue of self-sacrifice.

These among other factors are pressing a largely de-Christianized community to find a solution of the problem of the old and incurable. The decay or disappearance of Christianity in any society deprives the natural moral law of its strongest support. Hence the growth in our midst of what is aptly called "stock-yard eugenics," which ignores the rights of human personality and makes physical well-being the chief norm of fitness to live. The evil is progressive. At the beginning of the century sterilization, contraception, nudism, homosexuality, abortion and the killing of the unfit found no public support; now all these evil practices are advocated without shame by educated men and women, often indeed by members of the medical profession, and Associations are formed for their furtherance.<sup>2</sup> It is well known that certain doctors have drafted a Bill to make suicide and murder "legal" in certain circumstances, and that "public opinion" is being sedulously nursed to sanction this violation of the Divine Law. Just as the Birth-Preventionists secure a certain amount of unthinking support by giving their immoral practice the ambiguous title of "Birth-Control," so the advocates of "Mercy-Killing" disguise their wicked project by the name "Euthanasia" or easy dying. It is probably too late to rescue a term which

<sup>2</sup> There is, for instance, a "World League for Sexual Reform," and a "Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals": even the Council of the British Medical Association is sometimes the medium for suggesting "reforms" of this sort in the name of "progress."

is properly used to designate the use of opiates to induce sleep and so check the physical and mental distress usually, though not invariably, associated with the last stages of dissolution, from this degradation, but no one who stands for morality and clear thinking should hesitate to call the suggested practice by the title of this paper.

I submit, then, that "mercy-murder" would be a better term, as showing the true quality of the act and the motive alleged for its commission; for its general use would have the good effect of opening the eyes of the thoughtless to what they may be asked to approve of, viz., the putting to a painless death, subject (at present) to their own consent, human beings who suffer from the distressing effects of advanced senility or incurable disease. The use of the word *euthanasia* should be restricted to its proper medical sphere.

The arguments brought forward by advocates of the murder of their fellow human beings under plea of "humanity" do rarely, I think, make out such a good case for the measure as the opening paragraphs of this paper may fairly claim to do. This is in keeping with the usual methods of propaganda used by those who are unwilling to make the sacrifices of inclination needed to keep the moral law. They appeal to emotion, and stress the "humanitarian" aspect of the movement in preference to the economic. Yet surely economics is a human concern! Their common argument *ad misericordiam* takes this form—"We put hopelessly suffering animals out of their pain; why deny the same boon to man?"—an argument which, of course, lets the secularist cat out of the bag: no believing Christian could possibly use it. Man has an immortal soul and an eternal destiny, and God who unites soul with body alone has the right to dissolve their union. But here I am not concerned with the religious aspect of the case. I wish rather to consider the problem from the point of view of the secular and humanitarian State. Here on this terrain are some considerations which should make the sentimentalists pause.

The legal aspect need not delay us; it is being thrashed out. It is likely enough that, if the movement gets sufficient backing to make legislation possible, the lawyers will contrive a passable solution along the usual lines of our civilization—tribunals and certificates and the filling up of forms.

Medical difficulties are likely to be greater. Experienced

men are unwilling to be dogmatic about what disease is incurable and what is not. One knows people living useful lives after an operation which was cut short as hopeless, on account of the exposure of inoperable malignant disease: a period of desperate illness followed, and all the arguments for killing seemed to be applicable. Then, unaccountably, recovery took place. I am not referring to miraculous cures but only to what doctors consider a natural, though rather rare, exercise of recuperative powers.

A recent correspondent of the *British Medical Journal* revealed another objection, glossed over rather disingenuously by the "humanitarians," by demanding the appointment, under any Act *ad hoc*, of executioners to carry out the death-sentence of the tribunal. It has generally been taken for granted that members of the medical profession will naturally act in this capacity. Perhaps the association of ideas—the suffering animal, the vet; the human victim, the doctor—creates this quite unfounded assumption. I think I may say that the present temper of the majority of my colleagues, apart altogether from religion, would be strongly against such a duty being imposed on them, quite irrespective of any remuneration involved. It requires little imagination to realize that the social repercussions of such a step would be tremendous. Already the National Health Insurance Act is forcing many of us into the position of hired detectives in the pay of the great insurance companies: if we are to become executioners, the practice of the healing art will inevitably pass into the bonds of those less conscientiously qualified to exercise it: for, be it noted, even apart from carrying out the sentence, it is the doctor's certificate that will virtually pronounce it.

There are also minor difficulties. A harassed panel doctor will be sorely tempted against his better judgment to sign away the life of a patient who has become an almost intolerable burden both to relatives and physician. After all, most men die of incurable disease, and one has frequently to decide that a given case is hopeless: how much more ready one might be so to decide, if the decision relieved one of further trouble and distress? Or, a wealthy old man who suspects that he has out-wearied his attendants and his relatives, may still believe that his physician, at a guinea a visit, is doing his best for him, but the physician (the suggestion



is made by another correspondent to the *British Medical Journal*) is exposed to the insinuation that for the sake of his fees he is keeping deserving, or at least expectant, heirs out of their rights by not suggesting to his patient an easy way out of his miseries.

Consider further another human aspect of the matter which should not be overlooked even by "humanitarians." Although (at present) it is not proposed to shorten life without the consent of the doomed, this provision in practice might cause mental anguish more intolerable than the physical which it is proposed to end: one has only to picture a generous old man clinging conscientiously to life for a long time, but knowing all the while that his decision to free those around him from a grievous burden is being constantly solicited by their attitude and looks. This is not a cynical conjecture: we are considering extremes, and the sight of such suffering would be considered by many a justifiable motive for taking steps to end it.

Accordingly, it is, I think, plain that legalized killing of the senile or the insane or the grievously suffering or of those whose life inculpably causes serious discomfort to others, would introduce into the community the seeds of incalculable social disturbance, besides tending to eradicate those nobler elements of human nature which suffering is meant to exercise both in the patient and in those that tend him. Experience has always shown that to set aside the laws of morality with the idea of obviating "hard cases" only results in more widespread unhappiness. It is an attempt to be wiser than God who framed those laws for the welfare of His creatures. When He made marriage indissoluble and turned the contract into a sacrament so as to provide for its vicissitudes, He had in view social as well as individual good. Similarly, nothing but His prohibition of murder and of theft prevents society from lapsing into the jungle. Mercy-murder, which ignores both God's law and His purpose, whatever immediate and occasional benefits it might confer, would prove a long stride towards destroying social life as well. For man is not an irrational being, incapable of profiting by suffering. Pain has often proved the stimulus to the highest acts of virtue. The moral gain outbalances, even in this world, the price paid for it.

At the same time it is the physician's duty and privilege

to abolish suffering as much as is possible within the limits set by morality. And nowadays science provides many means of blunting the edge of suffering, and thus setting free, rather than inhibiting, the use of the patient's higher faculties. Moreover, since excessive pain shortens life, the alleviation of agony tends *per se* to prolong it, and it is the duty of a doctor to prescribe analgetics. It is sometimes difficult to know where precisely to draw the line, but it is always wrong deliberately to aim at overstepping it. So that even on compassionate grounds there is no case for humane killing.

Consideration of the harm done to the race by permitting divorce has done little to restrict the practice. Men are always individualist in their own personal affairs. So, merely human considerations will not hinder the unbelieving "humanitarian," who thinks this world ends all, from advocating, from genuine though mistaken motives of sympathy, the institution of mercy-murder. With all the more reason, therefore, should the Christian who knows how much is at stake labor to remove those appalling economic conditions which may one day be used to justify the extermination of the old and the useless. If the Christian conscience had shown itself more alive to the un-Christian conditions of modern civilization, we should not now be faced with such abominable suggestions as mercy-murder, whether the sympathy is evoked by the victim of suffering himself or by the condition of those whom his misfortune tends in turn to victimize.

## Christ the Worker's Brother

PROF. ALFRED O'RAHILLY

*Reprinted from the Standard (Dublin) in the issue of July 3, 1936.*

THE first great movement of real, human democracy was enshrined in the religion of Christ, when little bands of men and women, who called one another brothers or sisters, began to spread over the Mediterranean world. "Not many of you were what men called wise," says St. Paul to the Corinthians, "not many influential, not many high-born." The followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth were mostly

ordinary workers, even slaves. Paul himself, a weaver of tent-cloth, worked with his hands; when he came to Corinth, he found shelter and work with his fellow-craftsman, Aquila. And so worker spread to workers the new message; the fishers from Galilee became fishers of men. We know what happened. Christ gave us what in modern jargon would be called a sociological test of religion. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples; that you have love one for another." And so, when it was objected that ignorant workers were incapable of appreciating religious truth, an early apologist said that "among us you will find unlettered people, manual workers and old women who, if they are unable in words to prove the benefit of our doctrine, yet by their deeds show the benefit arising from their persuasion of its truth."

#### A TEST FOR TODAY

Even in those early days there were heretics as well as pagans, men who sought to mould Christianity to the fashionable intellectualist prejudices of the age, Docetists and Gnostics who entangled the Gospel in learned cobwebs. To them Ignatius of Antioch applied the tests of Brotherhood (Note—Ad Smyrnæos vi, 2):

Observe those who have strange opinions concerning the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us; see how contrary they are to the mind of God. They have no care for love, for the widow, for the orphan, for the distressed, for the afflicted, for the prisoner, or for him released, for the hungry or for the thirsty. . . . These men who deny God's (Eucharistic) gift are perishing in their disputes; it were better for them to have love that they also may attain to the resurrection.

Not a bad test to apply to the Modernists of today.

#### THE BOND OF UNION

There are thinkers who plan to regiment their fellows; there are those who love democracy in the abstract or visioned with themselves as Commissars. But to keep one's ideals while rubbing shoulders with the common men and women, to find one's brother or sister in every degraded specimen of humanity—this is entirely beyond naturalistic democracy which, left to itself, inevitably becomes a ruthless dictatorship.

The brutal persecuting spirit of pagan racialism and the pitiless cruelty of godless Communism are today examples warning us that brotherhood without Christ degenerates into the gregarious ravening of the pack. It is not without significance that the only European Power which has reintroduced chattel slavery is Russia.

A large portion of the early Christians must have been slaves. Unless we are familiar with the conditions in pagan Rome, we shall not appreciate the tremendous revolution in their status as evidenced in the writings of St. Paul; the current translation of "servant" instead of "slave" will further mislead us. When Paul found it necessary to advise Christian slaves that "those who have believing masters should not think the less of them because they are brothers" (2 Tim. vi, 2), he implies—all the more strikingly because he says it indirectly—something new in history; that the rights and obligations of Christian Brotherhood are paramount and fundamental and cannot be dissolved by any social relationship. Master and man are Brothers, is how St. Paul put it.

And St. Clement, writing in the first century, says: "We know that many among ourselves have given themselves to bondage that they might ransom others. Many have delivered themselves to slavery and provided food for others with the price they received for themselves" (1 Clem. iv, 2).

Thus began the great process of transformation; first in individual consciences and in Church ordinances, then in secular legislation, the slave was guaranteed individual and family rights; from being a chattel he became a brother. Why, one may ask, was not the very institution of slavery condemned? It is not at all as easy as one might think to condemn it in the abstract; there are many concrete conditions of earlier society wherein it might be the lesser of two evils, wherein its mitigation and gradual extinction would be preferable to sudden abolition.

#### THE CHURCH'S PROMISE

But the essential point is this: It is for the Church to proclaim our Christian Brotherhood with all its implications of rights and duties. It is indeed this message which gave the impetus and initiative to ultimate emancipation. But the concrete problem of abolition, in a given time and place, presupposes necessary historical conditions, involves techni-

cal and financial operations as well as a high development of State organization. When men became convinced that slavery, however theoretically reconcilable with Christian Brotherhood, was in actual practice incompatible, and when men possessed the necessary powers, then was slavery abolished. It is of vital importance that the Church should in every age, reiterate the Gospel teaching as binding in conscience within the social structure, provided that this latter does not directly contravene fundamental principles. Thus, while idolatry, Cæsar worship, unchastity, infanticide and chattel slavery were absolutely condemned, humanized servitude was for many centuries tolerated as the lesser of two evils. Eventually the community, acting through the State, acquired the will and the power to abolish it.

The problem of slavery is relevant to us today, as illustrating the necessity that the Church should continue to proclaim the solemn teaching on Christian Brotherhood, while leaving to each community the difficult technical problem of how best to carry it out. The message of the "New Testament" is urgent and emphatic. The important point to observe here is not the simple method for self-help adopted by the Christian minority in the pagan empire; what deserves our attention is the fact that it is taken for granted that Christianity must express itself socially, that love of God must be proved and externated as practical love of our brothers, and that this activity requires thought of organization. It is the effective carrying out of Christ's own picture of the great Assize:

When I was hungry you gave Me food; when I was thirsty you gave Me drink; when I was a stranger you sheltered Me; when I was naked you clothed Me; when I fell ill you visited Me; and when I was in prison you came to Me.

No wonder that the Good should say in astonishment: Lord, when did we see *You* hungry, thirsty, traveling without clothes, sick or in prison? and the King will reply: "Amen, I say to you, as often as you did it for one of these My Brothers, however lowly, you did it for Me."

#### BROTHERS AND SUBSTITUTES

Probably we sometimes wish we could have ministered to Jesus during His earthly life. Amen, He says to us, whenever now you serve one of My Brothers, however lowly or

degraded, you are serving Me. They are not only His Brothers, they are His substitutes, they are Christ Himself. And to each of them I am to be another Christ. This is the faith which inspired the early Church. And we must not imagine that there is any gush or sentimentality about it. It is inspiring and heroic, it appeals to the heart; but it also calls for hard-headed thought, planning and organization—all the more so in the complex society of today.

Today, with the development of the Christian State, laymen and women like ourselves are the deacons. The message of Christian Brotherhood is contained in the Gospels, the traditional teaching of the Church, the Social Encyclicals of the Popes. It is for us—citizens, voters, legislators—to implement and apply it in ways suitable to our special conditions. Our power is far greater and our responsibility far heavier than in the days of the early Church. We cannot, we dare not, shirk the task; for if we do, there are others who will not. There are false Christs proclaiming false Brotherhood; while we sleep, the enemy is sowing tare in our wheat-field.

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DECEMBER, 1936

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